

Why tech needs more female founders and diverse teams

The internet is by its very nature open and diverse. It is expansive and its potential is infinite. New technologies are often designed to solve problems, but when the people leading this space have a myopic view, both the tech and its users suffer.

When the people in charge of the tech space don't represent the reality of life for most people, what impact does this have? What opportunities are we missing because the people at the top don't represent the reality of life for most people?

As one of very few female CEOs in the market technology industry, I'd argue that more diversity and inclusion in teams and leadership leads to greater nuance in perspective. Bringing more voices to the table means an ability to see issues from various angles, understanding culturally relevant contexts and less biased data analysis. This is just not possible in a team that only represents a small corner of the world; regardless of personal experience or open-mindedness, everyone shares a limited perspective and is privy to their own unconscious biases.

My mission is to make the internet more human. And a core belief that my team and I share is that the ever growing range of technology and data we now have available must be shaped and improved by real human behaviour.

It's too simplistic to paint a picture of numbers and data vs behaviour and emotion, but the combination of the two is critical. Intuitive data and insights can make marketing and technology less about the numbers and more about the reality of life online.

I believe that technology featuring human-friendly data will be the future – which means systems and platforms that make use of big data and AI, but that also stop to consider nuance and actual real-life behaviour. Are women better able to set that up? Not necessarily, but it is important to have a diverse range of voices helping to shape it.

Data should guide us in the right direction but reducing people to data points is reductive. You need to understand the nuances of interests and what drives them beyond the categories in which they sit – and that's done by combining data and technology with an understanding of real-life behaviours.

When we first launched *Wearisma*, we could see that brands needed an intelligent way to help them connect with influencers internationally, at scale. To do this we advertised to build up our team on the ground around the world to help source local influencers to add to the platform. The data that was collected was combined with machine learning to help us obtain in-depth local insights. That insight could not have been created centrally or by a machine, and is part of what makes our platform so powerful.

It's only by immersing yourself in another culture that you start to understand those untranslatable phrases – from emotions to concepts that simply don't exist in other countries. Diverse teams with diverse experiences ensure the value of human input is rich enough to make your product better and will continually improve.

Diversity and inclusion is important when building out teams, and it's also something that brands are shining a light on. Consumers want to know more about what the companies they buy from stand for, and brands are increasingly making this a part of their communications strategy.

Because we exist in the influencer marketing space, we've built new technology that allows brands to uniquely identify influencers passionate about the topics of diversity, equality and inclusivity. This empowers brands to give a voice to those marginalised in their communities and build authentic ties with the communities they care about.

The more diverse the team, the richer the data and the better the product. More inclusion is not only the right thing to do, it also makes good business sense. When we can make the internet and technology more open, we create a place where everyone has a chance to shine.

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